

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 132081
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O GOLDSMITH

APPROVED BY: S/S-O:S GOLDSMITH

-----081817Z 118750 /41

O 081757Z JUN 77 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 132081

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM TEL AVIV DTD 08 JUN 1977

DTG O 081244Z JUN 77 QTE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 4077

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

ALSO PASS WHITE HOUSE

DEPT PLEASE REPEAT TO AMMAN, CAIRO, DAMASCUS AND JIDDA

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS US

SUBJECT: THE U.S. AND ISRAEL--SOME GNAWING CONCERNS

1. I ARRIVED IN ISRAEL THREE WEEKS AGO TODAY, THE DAY AFTER
THE ELECTIONS, ANTICIPATING PLENTY OF PROBLEMS. BUT AS
THE BEGIN ERA UNEXPECTEDLY BEGINS, IT SUDDENLY IS OBVIOUS

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THAT THE RAPIDS AHEAD COULD LEAD TO NIAGARA. WE HAVE
REPORTED AT PERHAPS UNDUE LENGTH ELSEWHERE ON THE DEEPLY
TROUBLED STATE OF ISRAEL AND OF US/ISRAELI RELATIONS
(TEL AVIV 4048). BUT I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT A FEW PERSONAL
WORRIES AND HUNCHES:

2. COMMUNICATIONS FAILURES. SOMEHOW I SENSE THERE MAY

HAVE BEEN A SHORT CIRCUIT THESE PAST MONTHS. SOMEHOW THERE MAY HAVE ARISEN IN WASHINGTON AN ILLUSION THAT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IS ONE POSSIBLE OPTION. IF THAT ILLUSION DOES EXIST, I WANT TO TRY TO DISPEL IT. IN MY JUDGMENT, THAT OF ALL MY STAFF, AND THAT OF ALL MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES HERE, IT IS NO OPTION WHATSOEVER. ON THIS ISSUE, OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE ISRAELI ELECTORATE AGREES, AND RABIN/ALLON/PERES ARE AS ADAMANT AS BEGIN/DAYAN/WEIZMAN, TO SAY NOTHING OF GOLDA. TO BELIEVE THAT SOMEHOW ANY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT CAN BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD ONLY BE TO COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTAND THE ISRAELI CHARACTER AND PEOPLE. WE SHOULD NOT BASE ANY U.S. POLICY ON SUCH A FALLACY.

3. "BEGIN THE HAWK." THERE ARE SOME REAL HAWKS IN THE LIKUD; MEN WHO SEE WAR AS INEVITABLE ANYWAY AND COULD LOOK FOR SOME ARAB PRETEXT TO LAUNCH A DEVASTATING PREEMPTION. BUT THEY ARE IN THE MINORITY, AND MANY OTHERS STILL MOURN THE FEARFUL COST HERE OF THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. (HAD THE U.S. SUFFERED A SIMILAR PROPORTION OF CASUALTIES, WE WOULD HAVE LOST OVER 160,000 DEAD AND OVER 400,000 WOUNDED.) THOUGH I HAVE TALKED LONGER WITH BEGIN THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER DIPLOMAT HERE, I ADMIT I DO NOT YET KNOW HIM WELL. BUT PARTLY FROM SOME ISRAELIS WHO DO, I SEE HIM PARADOXICALLY NOW TO BE A MAN OF PEACE--NOT WAR. AT LEAST HE IS NOT ITCHING FOR A FIGHT; RATHER HE IS ITCHING TO NEGOTIATE--PREFERABLY WITH ARABS DIRECTLY. AND HE MIGHT DO MORE THAN WE NOW SUSPECT IN ORDER TO GET THE
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CHANCE.

4. THE CALENDAR TRAP. THIS IS A NEW POLITICAL ERA HERE. ALL THE FAMILIAR ASSUMPTIONS HAVE CRUMBLED. MEN ARE COMING TO POWER AFTER POLITICAL LIFETIMES OF OPPOSITION AND THEREFORE WITHOUT THE DISCIPLINE AND RESPONSIBILITY WHICH POWER BRINGS. IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE KNOW HOW THAT MAY CHANGE THEM. AND THE ARABS WILL HAVE TO DO SOME RECALCULATION ABOUT THEIR OWN PRIORITIES AS THEY ASSESS THE NEW ISRAELI LEADERSHIP. ALL THIS ARGUES FOR FLEXIBLE NEGOTIATING CALENDARS; NO APOCALYPTIC TIMETABLES; AND PERHPAS FOR RUNNING SOME RISKS WITH ARAB IMPATIENCE TO MINIMIZE THE GREATER RISKS FROM ISRAELI INEXPERIENCE IN GOVERNING.

5. THIS DOES NOT MEAN ABANDONING EFFORTS TO GET TO GENEVA THIS YEAR. BUT IT DOES MEAN STARTING NOW TO THINK OF OTHER WAYS TO KEEP A NEGOTIATING OPTION BEFORE THE PARTIES, SHOULD GENEVA PROVE IMPOSSIBLE. WE MUST CONTINUE TO

MANAGE THE ARAB-ISRAELI IMPASSE SOMEHOW THIS YEAR SO
AS TO PRECLUDE ANOTHER WAR, EVEN IF A TRUE SETTLEMENT
REMAINS ONLY A RECEDING MIRAGE.

6. IT ALSO RAISES A QUESTION ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE
BEGIN/CARTER MEETING. THAT MEETING WILL CAST A LONG
SHADOW OVER THE DIFFICULT NEGOTIATING ROAD AHEAD. IF IT
TAKES PLACE IMMEDIATELY, BEGIN WILL NOT HAVE YET ABOSRBED
MANY OF THE LESSPALATABLE EFFECTS OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF POWER. WE SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER A
PREPARATORY VISIT BY HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, UNDOUBTEDLY
DAYAN, MIGHT NOT IMPROVE THE CHANCES THAT BEGIN'S OWN
TRIP WILL ADVANCE RATHER THAN RETARD THE GENEVA PROSPECTS.
LEWIS UNQTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CAT-A, BRIEFING MATERIALS, PEACE PLANS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 08-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE132081
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O GOLDSMITH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N770003-0667
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770677/aaaacpmg.tel
Line Count: 130
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8f73a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2225221
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE U.S. AND ISRAEL--SOME GNAWING CONCERNS
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, IS, US, XF, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8f73a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009